THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for good program management consists of the following five components:

1. Problem Identification (Community Needs Assessment)
2. Goal Setting (*WyoROMA*)
3. Data gathering (Monthly Report/IS Survey/NPI Report)
4. Impact Analysis (MBO/MBR)
5. Evaluation (*WyoROMA*)

Problem Identification:

Conducting a community needs assessment is the logical first step in the planning process. While local agency personnel often know a great deal about the needs that exist in the community, a well-conducted needs assessment is a necessary tool for proving the need and justifying resources for programs that can impact or solve the identified problems.

Needs assessment surveys generally measure one of two possible occurrences: (1) a determination of which of the various services currently offered meets the greatest need; or (2) a determination of what types of services people need whether or not that service is currently provided. The first type is most useful where the data will be used to make decisions regarding the most appropriate allocation of available resources among existing agencies. The second type can assess whether existing services are appropriate to meet community needs or if different kinds of services should be provided in the future.

Goal Setting:

Since FFY 2000, all CSBG service providers have, to some extent, been using the *WyoROMA* system of defining Goals, Objectives, Anticipated Results, and methods for measuring CSBG activities. This system provides a logic by which service providers can determine what activities best meet stated goals and how to measure the results of the activities that are conducted.

For purposes of WyoROMA, the following definitions apply:

Goals: A goal is the general end toward which efforts are directed, and addresses the primary issue or problem to be solved. It is both qualitative and quantifiable, but need not be quantified (measurable).

Objectives: An objective is a clear target for specific action. It is linked directly to the goal and is quantified (measurable) as a time-based statement of intent, emphasizing the results to be achieved by that action at the end of a specific time.

Results: A result is an indicator of the actual impact or effect of an action on a stated condition or problem. It is a tool to assess the effectiveness of an action and/or the public benefit to be derived from that action. It is typically expressed as a percentage, rate, or ratio.

Measures: A measure is a tool for counting the services and good produced through an action. The number of people receiving a service and the number of services delivered are often used as measures.

Strategies: A Strategy is a method for achieving goals and objectives. It is used to demonstrate the process for transforming activities into measures (achievements) and ultimately into priorities (results) that cause the objectives, and ultimately the goals, of a program to be accomplished. It reflects cost/benefits and best use of financial and other resources, or the chronology of activities.

There is a hierarchy involved in goal setting that matches the hierarchy of authority in a top-down/bottom up structure.

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              U.S.
             DHHS

           WDH/CSP

          Tripartite
           Boards

        Service Providers
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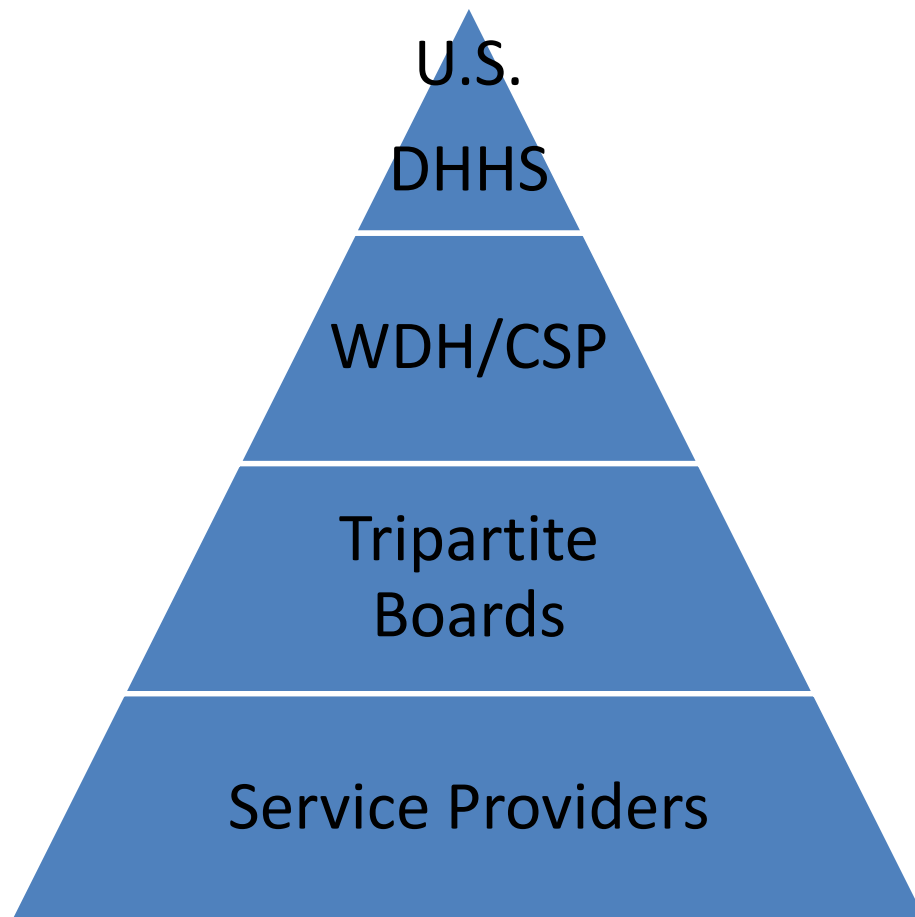
Program direction, for example, in the CSBG Program flows downward from the federal government, through the state office, to the tripartite boards, and ultimately to the service providers. Conversely, information flows upward from the service providers through the tripartite boards to the state office and, ultimately, to the policy makers in the federal government. Based on the information received, federal decision makers adjust the policies to provide improved program policy.

In much the same way, goal setting begins with a top-down flow from goal to objective, to results (outcomes), to measurements (outputs), and the information derived from those lower level measurements rises up to an adjustment of goals to provide better direction. Anticipated CSBG program goals are often revised on the basis of information derived from an analysis of measurable data.

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                          GOAL


                       Objective


                       Result(s)


                   Measurement(s)
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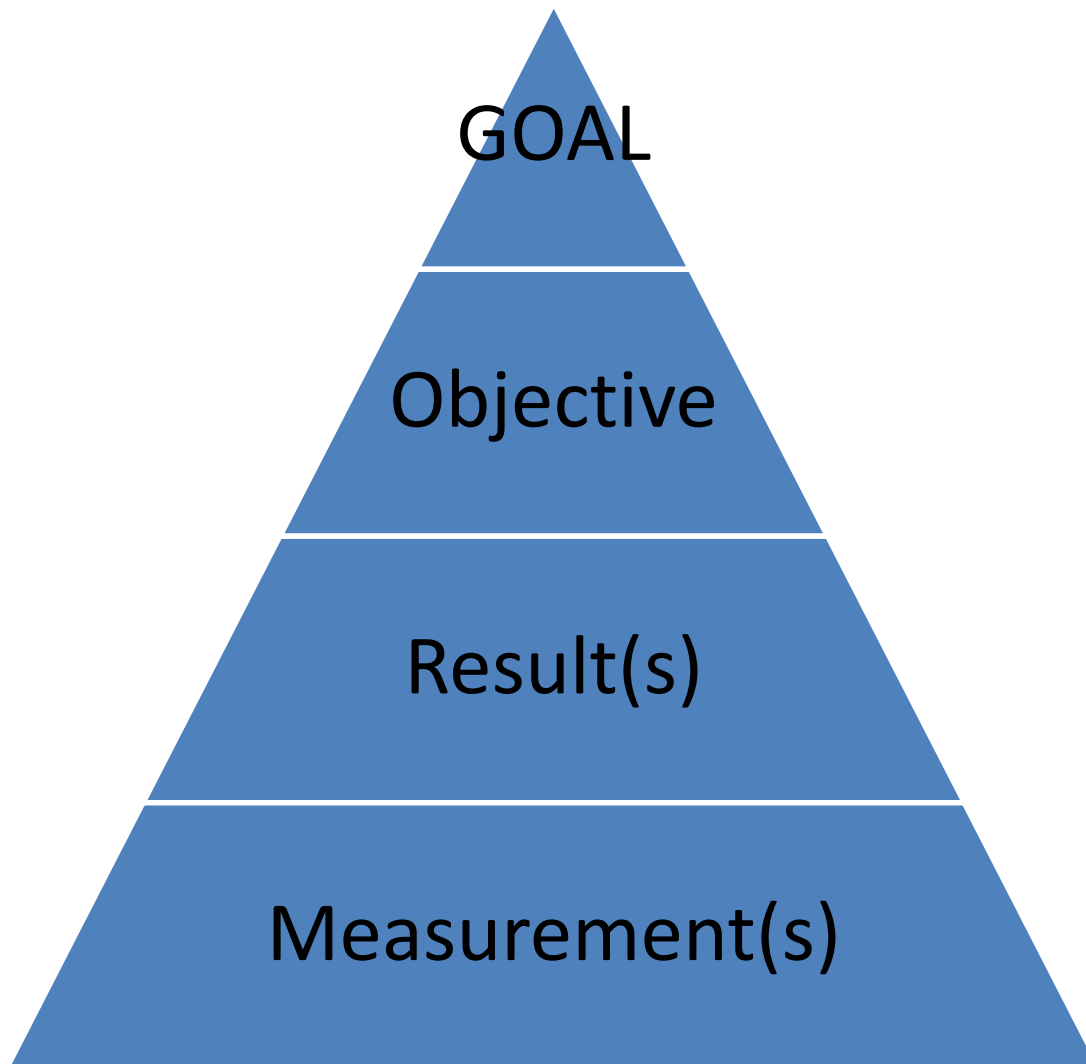
With the program goal (whether at the service provider, tripartite board, CSP, or other level) stating broadly where the program direction is headed, the Objective will quantify that broad statement to show what part of the goal can be reached, given the limitations of time and resources. Results will show what impact is anticipated in the community as a result of meeting the program objective, and Measurements defines what services are being provided to attain those results.

It should be noted that this "Top down" analysis defines expectations. Within the WyoROMA Reporting Criteria (following) potential community impacts are anticipated, based on knowledge gained through prior years' data. In the "evaluation" phase, information will flow from "measures" through "results" to "objectives" to help the program define future year goals more succinctly.

The WyoROMA instrument further allows the program to define "strategies" so that people outside the program can better understand the method for accomplishing the program goals and objectives. While that is useful to CSP in understanding how service providers intend to achieve their program objectives, it is also helpful toward informing community leaders and partners about the program.

Data gathering:

Over the past few years, Community Services Program (CSP) has been working with tripartite boards and service providers to improve data gathering at the community level. Each community is tracking and reporting the number of unduplicated persons served and services provided monthly, and have participated in the annual Information System (IS) Survey and National Performance Indicators (NPI) Report. As communities become more proficient in monthly reporting and responding to the IS Survey/NPI Report, information about provision of services is improved both for the purpose of reporting to CSP and to make better informed decisions within individual programs.

Impact Analysis:

Many informative management strategies have been published over the years on the concept of "Management by Objectives" (MBO) or "Managing by Results" (MBR). Most of these texts are beneficial in creating an in-house method for analyzing the impact of programs that are being conducted. Of equal importance, MBO and MBR provide quick information to others within the community of the way individual program activities impact the overall goal of the program by showing what effect that program has on changing the community environment. In the CSBG Program, outsiders often look at projects as enabling, rather than impacting, poverty within the community. Management by Objectives strategies, combined with the data from the IS Survey and other tools and the WyoROMA structure, demonstrates quickly and efficiently that the activities can and do make a difference in the community.

Evaluation:

One of the advantages of the WyoROMA system, is that it encourages not only top-down analysis of what activities should be conducted to achieve recognized program goals, but also bottom-up evaluation of the effectiveness of activities in impacting those higher level goals. As the program reports out the activities that were conducted, it can also assess the effect of those activities in changing the community environment (results), and whether those results moved the program closer to its intended goal. As noted earlier, the upward flow of information provides for better goal statements in future years.

Name of Your Agency:_____

Agency Address:_____

Contact Person & Telephone Number:_____

Project or Activity:_____

GOAL:

OBJECTIVE:

RESULTS:

MEASURES:

STRATEGIES:

Which of the six National Goals will be impacted by this project/activity?

1) Helping low-income people become more self-sufficient?   ( )

2) Improving the conditions in which low-income people live?   ( )

3) Providing low-income people with a stake in their community?   ( )

4) Achieving partnerships among supporters and providers of services
   to low-income people?   ( )

5) Increasing the capacity of agencies to achieve results?   ( )

6) Strengthening family and other supportive systems to help low-income
   people (especially vulnerable populations) achieve their potential?   ( )

Progress Toward Objective:
(Relative to the Measures identified on Page 1)

Grant Period: _____For Month of: _____

	This month	Year to Date
Number of Clients Served:	_____	_____
Unduplicated Number of Clients Served:	_____	_____
Number of Services Provided:	_____	_____